



A SEED OF JOY

August 2013

For none of us lives for ourselves alone, and none of us dies for ourselves alone. If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.

Romans 14:7-8

I was intrigued recently by something John Piper wrote in his book, *When I Don't Desire God*: "A Christian, no matter how dark the season of sadness, never is completely without joy in God. I mean that there remains in his heart the seed of joy in the form, perhaps of only a remembered taste of goodness and an unwillingness to let the goodness go."

But is that true? I don't think it is for me when I'm in the depths. When I'm so depressed I want to die, it's hard to see my way out of the misery, I search for a way out of the darkness but it seems impossible.

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At times like that I don't think I really can remember any "taste of goodness." My seed of joy lies dormant and can't be accessed until it's brought to life.

What will help it germinate?

Often it will simply take time and patience for the soil—the body, heart and soul—to be healthy enough to support its coming to life. My seed needs rest, warmth, light, love, care, nourishment to gradually help the joy return. For me, Scripture or wise words from a friend who loves me sometimes help to bring back the light I need for my seed of joy to grow.

The sentiments expressed in the Scripture above have given me such relief and helped my joy to slowly come back during dark times. I wonder if it would do the same for you.

"...none of us lives for ourselves alone...we belong to the Lord."

Those words remind me that my life isn't only about me and what I'm going through. I don't have to think of myself alone. There is a world beyond me.

Although I might not be able now, I'm reminded that I will one day be able to use what I'm going through. Within me are gifts that can benefit others. At least there have been, and I'm encouraged to believe there could be again. Sometimes that thought, as well as the reminder that I belong to God, boosts my spirit in a way nothing else can.

I come to realize what a privilege it is when I can serve God. To somehow be an instrument in His hands: to love others, as He loves me; to comfort those who are hurting, as He comforts me; to support. Yes, one day, when I'm feeling stronger, I'll be able to do that again.

And now...my confidence grows; my seed begins to sprout.

I pray that this Scripture will speak to all of you, as it has to me. I hope that you can all be encouraged to find joy, knowing that you don't live for yourself alone. You belong to God. And there's a whole world out there, waiting for you to join it again.

Blessings to you all,

marja